THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) State wide survey of vultures was done in Rajasthan recently. The estimated vulture population in Bhilwara district is around 240.

(b) Protection is being provided to the vultures under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act. 1972.

Forest divisions in Uttaranchal

† 1094. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to referto answer to Unstarred Question 3983, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd May, 2002 and state:

(a) the total number of Forest divisions in Uttaranchal and by when their expension is likely to be taken up, with a view of getting permanent cooperation from forest committees in the form of public cooperation, for safeguarding the forests against fires; and

(b) whether the amount of rupees 542.20 lacs received under this head during 2000-2001 has been utilised completely, stating whether extension of this head to the whole State for this scheme would have been proper?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) There are 38 Territorial and 10 Functional Forest Divisions in Uttaranchal.

There is no proposal pending with the Central Government regarding the change in the number of existing Forest Divisions in Uttaranchai.

(b) Under the World Bank project, an amount of Rs. 12.84 lacs was disbursed to the Village Forest Committees during 2000-01 and 2001 -02 in six identified division for protecting forests from fire. Under the Project, only actual expenditures are reimbursed. As per the Project Agreement for the World Bank assisted Uttar Pradesh-Uttaranchal Forestry Project, the component relating to forest fire protection is to be implemented in six Forest Divisions only.

Import of Genetically Modified Foods

1095. SHRI B J. PANDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that genetically modified foods are entering in our market from abroad;

(b) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has not put any restrictions or curbs on import of such harmful food products; and

(c) what safeguards have been prescribed against import of such harmful foods in our country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Rule 11 of the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells 1989 notified under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, provides that foods stuffs, ingredients in food stuffs and additives including processing aids containing or consisting of genetically engineered organisms or cells, shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). Thus, import of Genetically modified food requires the approval of GEAC. The GEAC considers the proposals on a case-by-case basis taking into account biosafety aspects including impact on human health.

Action plan for conservation of coastal and marine Environment

1096. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to prepare an action plan for the conservation of coastal and marine environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of achievements made by Government in this tield during the last ten years?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Ministry of Environment and Forests launched a Scheme for Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs 1986. On the recommendations of the National Committee on Mangroves and Coral Reefs, 30 Mangrove and 4 Coral Reef areas in the country have